



WISCONSIN MAIN STREET News

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Watertown Off to a 'Quick Start'

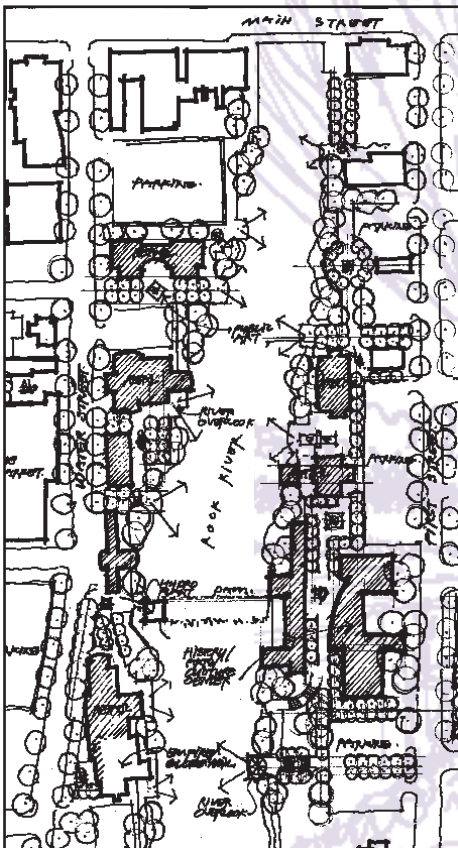
Watertown, one of the newest Wisconsin Main Street communities, will be the first Wisconsin community to try the Quick Start by Public Process, a comprehensive service for advancing the commercial aspects of communities.

Quick Start by Public Process involves the entire community in determining the direction for downtown public improvements, planning and marketing. It offers a cost-effective means of developing strategic implementation plans for downtown revitalization programs, promotions, and streetscapes.

Watertown's technical visit was held the week of November 13, 2000. The consultant team consisted of Dale Helmich, Dale Helmich, Ltd.; Jay Schlinsog, Downtown Professionals Network; and Michael Schroeder, Hoisington Koegler Group, Inc. The team conducted focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and a future forum. It also reviewed background information to determine the community's plan. The plan included the vision for the downtown, design sketches, the marketing plan, the Watertown Main Street program goals, and an outline for the 2001 action plan. Approximately 75 people from the community participated in the process.

According to Watertown Main Street Manager Sherrie Avery-King, "the process generated so much enthusiasm. It really brought the downtown program together." Recommendations from the process included:

- Partner with the Arts Council to initiate a program of permanent and temporary public art to tell the story of the community's history and heritage in the downtown district.
- Focus on the Rock River as a primary resource including redesigning the river walk and developing an "activity generator" such as a history, art and heritage center.
- Develop, design and implement the "Downtown Watertown, Memories in Motion" marketing campaign theme.
- Grow the volunteer base of the organization including establishing a volunteer recognition program or "Danke Schoen Dinner."
- Recruit more retail businesses to fill empty store fronts downtown including the development of a "Rathskellar" with a river view, located in Fisher's basement.



Left: Proposed river walk

Right: Proposed history, art, and heritage center



TOURISM

Retail Strategies to Capture Tourism Dollars

Service and Hospitality (part 3 of 3)

This article summarizes how some retailers have made shopping an enjoyable and engaging experience that complements tourism. These examples were identified through interviews with over 100 retailers in the Midwest. They reflect business operations in a variety of small communities, with varying levels of tourism activity.

1. Provide visitor information.

The Pamida discount store in Neillsville, Wisconsin, provides tourists with county maps, brochures and calendars free of charge.

2. Set hours of operation. in relation to area attractions.

The Log Cabin Store in Danbury, Wisconsin, provides a convenient place to buy groceries, souvenirs, sporting goods, furs, and moccasins. It sells these products to nearby casino visitors by maintaining the same hours as the gaming operation.

3. Talk to each person that comes in the door.

The Hurley Coffee Company in Hurley, Wisconsin, makes sure each visitor to the restaurant is greeted as they walk in the door. It tries to find out something about each person, even if it is only where they are from.

4. Offer free gift-wrapping.

The Stubli-Haus in Rockton, Illinois, sells many gift items to tourists. Accordingly, free gift-wrapping is an important service for visitors when they are away from home.

5. Offer shipping.

Finishing Touch, an antique furniture store at the Farm Market in Wautoma, Wisconsin, offers free delivery to customers in Wisconsin and northern Illinois, encouraging people to buy larger items. Delivery options enable a retailer to ship something for arrival by the time the visitor returns home.

6. Provide repair services to visitors.

Many of the travelers through Sublette, Illinois, are motor home owners visiting the area's camping facilities on weekends. Accordingly, Vaessen Chevrolet provides Saturday morning service hours.

7. Know other languages.

The Wal-Mart in Saukville, Wisconsin, is able to accommodate non-English speaking visitors with store associates who speak a second language.

8. Offer facilities for recreationists.

The Elroy Commons Trail Shop in Elroy, Wisconsin, serves as a refreshing stop for bicyclists along the Elroy-Sparta Trail. Customers appreciate amenities such as restrooms, water fountains, and showers.

9. Provide clean restrooms.

Clean restrooms make a positive statement about your business. One Wisconsin variety store has become a stop for bus groups and older travelers because of its clean restroom reputation. Once visitors are in the store, they purchase gifts and convenience items.

10. Consider a toll-free phone number.

Recognizing that three quarters of its customers are tourists Cedar Creek Winery, in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, offers an 800 number. This service is used to provide visitor information and updates on special events throughout the year

11. Hire and take care of good employees.

The Norske Nook restaurants in Osseo, Rice Lake and Hayward, Wisconsin, attracts and retains high quality staff by paying higher wages and offering

health insurance and retirement programs. This investment in personnel has resulted in an excellent staff who is experienced in customer service.

12. Teach employees about the area.

Baumgartner's Cheese Store in Monroe, Wisconsin, makes sure its employees know area visitor points of interest and can give advice and directions to out-of-towners. Similarly, Root River Outfitters in Lanesboro, Minnesota, hires employees who know about canoeing, rafting, and bicycling activities and enjoy teaching about these activities.

13. Offer rentals.

Jones-Berry Lumber Company in Amboy, Illinois, understands that second-home owners in nearby recreational areas often need power tools. Offering tool rentals has also increased sales of building materials. Similarly, the General Store in Campbellsport, Wisconsin, rents boats, cross-country skis, snowshoes, and tandem bikes. The store finds that by offering rental equipment appropriate for area recreation, the store has enjoyed increased traffic and sales.

14. Develop a mission statement that recognizes hospitality.

The Fireside dinner theater in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, constantly reminds staff and management of the importance of service and hospitality. Its mission statement reads "People will come where they are invited, where they have been made to feel welcome, and where they have been asked to return."

15. Accept advance orders.

Hickory Acres Farm Gift Shop near Potosi, Wisconsin, bakes many of its homemade breads, pies, and cakes to order. Visitors can make a trip to the store knowing their desired selection will be ready and waiting for them.



DESIGN CASE STUDY

Falls Firehouse Pizza Sheboygan Falls

16. Accept credit cards.

Credit card sales are expected to increase to one-half of all retail sales by the year 2000. Travelers often prefer to use charge cards so they do not have to carry cash.

17. Guarantee your products and services.

Offer a "no questions asked" policy. Typically, only a few people will take advantage of this guarantee. While we often want to focus on the rare customer that may abuse this policy, we forget about the new business that is generated by this offer.

18. Improve your out-of-town return policy.

As tourists often reside far away, a convenient return-by-mail policy should be established.

19. Smile and practice effective human relations.

Management of the Log Cabin Store in Danbury, Wisconsin, advises other retailers to be courteous, kind and patient. Effective service and hospitality is what brings them back as repeat customers.

Do you want to learn more about how to sell to tourists in your community?

The University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX) Center for Community Economic Development is developing an educational program to help communities and their retailers tap into this important market segment. Please contact us through your local extension community resource development educator.

This summary was prepared by Bill Ryan, community business development specialist with the UWEX Center for Community Economic Development. Content drawn from a guidebook titled Tourism and Retail Development: Attracting Tourists to Local Businesses written by B. Ryan, J. Bloms, J. Hovland, D. Scheler, with contributions from P. Alexander, J. Braatz, R. Burke, H. Hanson, M. Jones, K. McGuire, B. Pinkovitz, and A. Torketson, 1999.

The renovation and expansion of Falls Firehouse Pizza into an adjacent storefront allows customers to be served in a new and spacious setting. It also provides a waiting area as well as space that can be reserved for private parties. In addition, the project turned a vacant building into one that is contributing to the community's tax base, and improved the downtown's appearance. Information submitted by Nancy Verstrate, Executive Director of Sheboygan Falls Chamber-Main Street.

Building Address: 405 Broadway

Building History: In 1987, Falls Firehouse Pizza opened for business after completing a major renovation of the William Servis Carriage Factory, built in 1854. The business eventually outgrew this location. Dorothy Schueffner, owner, decided to expand into the vacant building next door, constructed in 1856.

This building, constructed as a school, was originally located further south on Broadway. The two-story, pine-sided Greek Revival style building housed a school from 1856-1870. In 1871, the structure moved to 406 Broadway. The building became an agricultural depot in 1873. In 1912, Henry Fricke purchased the building for an automobile garage. The building moved a second time in 1917, to its current location, 405 Broadway. The back of the building still faces the street because it was not turned around during the second move. Eventually, the building housed Fricke's Bicycle Sales & Service. A false front, put up in the late 1940s, covered the gabled roof. In 1969, the building was sold and used for a radio and tv repair shop followed by an auto supply store. It subsequently stood vacant.

Scope of Projects: Falls Firehouse Pizza closed in February 1999 so renovations to the inside of both buildings as well as the outside of the second building could begin. The addition of an open staircase



Before expansion and renovation.



Falls Firehouse Pizza today.

to the second floor required considerable structural alterations to get the proper support. After the project was completed, the restaurant re-opened in November 1999. Dorothy Schueffner, owner, and her family invested considerable "sweat equity" in order to keep costs down. In addition, Schueffner attained funds from a local bank and a facade grant from Sheboygan Falls Main Street.

Architect/Contractor: Dorothy Schueffner acted as general contractor. Steve Schmitt, Jos. Schmitt & Sons Construction, Sheboygan Falls, did the construction work. Dick Mauer, RCM Carpentry, also in Sheboygan Falls did the carpentry work. Ambrose Engineering, Cedarburg, provided the architectural services. Schueffner is quick to point out that this was truly a collaborative effort.

Total Cost: \$200,000



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Drive-in Movies are Back in De Pere

De Pere Main Street sponsored its first annual drive-in movie on August 15, 2000. "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" was shown in black and white and in 3-D. A volunteer dressed up in a "creature costume" made appearances around town to help promote the event. Main Street offered children's games and refreshments before the show. The event was a sell-out, with more than 200 vehicles participating, and netted a profit of \$5,400. Plans are already underway for two drive-in movies to be shown next summer.

De Pere brings back the nostalgia of the drive-in movie, complete with a visit from the "Creature from the Black Lagoon"



Marshfield is a 'Dream Town'

Demographic Daily, a newsletter focusing on demographic and economic statistics, named 12 small cities in Wisconsin on a list of 141 "dream towns." The study measured quality-of-life data including access to health care, low cost of living, and short commutes. Marshfield, which ranked eighth nationwide, was the only Wisconsin city to make the top ten. Wisconsin tied

with Minnesota for the most places on the list for cities with populations between 10,000 and 50,000. G. Scott Thomas, editor of Demographics Daily, said "We found many types of dream towns around the country—ranging from resorts and state capitals to college communities and good, old-fashioned small towns. But all 141 have two things in common:

their quality of life is excellent and they are safe, low-stress alternatives to congested big cities and sprawling suburbs. Other Wisconsin cities on the list included: Fond du Lac, Fort Atkinson, Manitowoc, Menomonie, Monroe, Plover, River Falls, Stevens Point, Wausau, Whitewater, and Wisconsin Rapids.

Blanchardville Sets Up Workshops

Blanchardville CommunityPride, Inc. established a series of bi-monthly workshops designed to assist existing business owners in a variety of areas, as well as those interested in starting a business. Workshop topics to date include How to Start a New Business, Small Business Management, Advertising, and

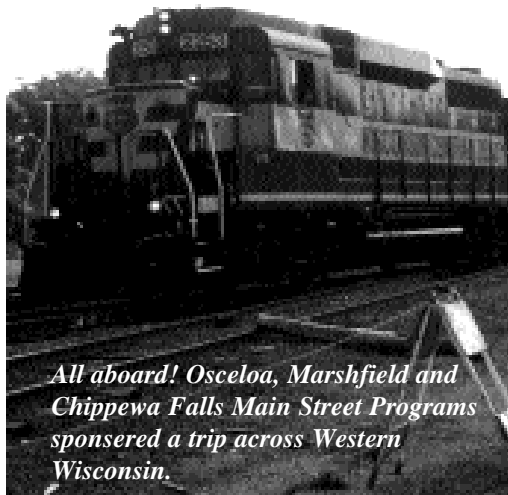
Computer Skills for the Small Business Owner. Workshops are advertised in the local newspaper, through direct mail, in the Blanchardville CommunityPride newsletter, and in flyers placed in area communities. There have been approximately 20 people in attendance for each workshop.

The program is funded by a grant from the W2 Southwest Consortium, an organization responsible for redistributing welfare funds back into the community through focused programming.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Meander to Marshfield on the Right Track



All aboard! Osceola, Marshfield and Chippewa Falls Main Street Programs sponsored a trip across Western Wisconsin.

The Osceola, Marshfield, and Chippewa Falls Main Street Programs worked together to sponsor and coordinate rail passenger service across Western Wisconsin as it was in the 1950s. This past August more than 600 tourists, from 14 states participated in the first ever "Meander to Marshfield" trip. The excursion began on a Saturday in Osceola, traveled through the St. Croix River Valley, and included an overnight stay in Marshfield. After arriving in Marshfield participants could choose from a variety of activities including golf, tours, a twilight train trip, and a movie in the historic theater downtown. Additional

sponsors included the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway, the Minnesota Transportation Museum, and the Osceola Historical Society. Plans are already being made for next year's event.

Ripon Puts on a Dickens of a Christmas

Ripon's Dickens of a Christmas celebrated its 10th anniversary this December. The event features "Living Windows" that depict late 19th century culture, including Victorian parlor games and women suffragists. The scenes are set up in store-front windows throughout the downtown. The evening also includes a live nativity scene, horse-drawn carriage rides, a holiday tea, and vendors selling roasted chestnuts. The event was inspired by the community's historic connections to Ripon, Yorkshire, England. Once again, the event drew several thousand visitors from all over the Midwest.

Pewaukee Captured By Pirates!

Positively Pewaukee hosted its second annual fundraising dinner in November "Black Beard's Bash and Treasure Auction." To find Black Beard's hideout, participants were given half of a treasure map and had to pick up the other half from participating downtown merchants. Once at the bash, guests could dig to win a variety of real gems, including diamonds, sapphires, and rubies courtesy of the Jewelry Mechanic. The evening also including dinner, live

music and a silent auction. The cost was \$30 a person. More than 150 people attended the event. It is still not known whether anyone had to walk the plank, but it has been confirmed that Positively Pewaukee netted just under \$10,000 for its ongoing redevelopment efforts.





ANNOUNCEMENTS

Preservation Week May 13-19, 2001

Below are excerpts from a letter by Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which was first printed in Preservation Magazine.

The neighborhood school, a much-loved symbol of American community life, is in danger.

The theme of Preservation Week 2001, "Restore, Renew, Rediscover your Historic Neighborhood Schools!" calls on us to do all we can to keep these community icons alive as functional components of our education system. If your school is endangered, fight to save it. If it's still in use or has been saved, celebrate it. In addition to being architectural landmarks, these schools are anchors around

which neighborhoods form and grow. Their destruction is both wasteful and completely unnecessary, since sensitively renovated and well-maintained older buildings can provide first-class modern classrooms where new generations of students can learn in safe, supportive environments. With parents and educators clamoring for smaller, community-oriented schools, it makes no sense to sacrifice sound historic buildings for the sake of huge impersonal new facilities in locations accessible only by car, too remote to have any meaningful connection to the community where the students live. More information on planning and publicizing your Preservation Week event(s) can be found on the National Trust for Historic Preservation web site: www.nthp.org/preservationweek/



Websites to Explore

Business Improvement Districts

Wisconsin Act 184, signed into law in 1984, gives Wisconsin municipalities the power to establish one or more Business Improvement Districts within their community.

<http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/cp&d/bidpage/bid.html>

EntreWorld

This search engine delivers useful information, guidance, and contacts for small business owners.

<http://www.entreworld.org/>

Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help entrepreneurs start, run, and grow their businesses.

<http://www.sba.gov/>

Tourism Marketing

and Customer Service 101

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism offers a series of basic tourism marketing and customer service educational courses.

<http://tourism.state.wi.us/agency/htm/es98z.html>

Travel Wisconsin

This travel guide describes tourism attractions, such as historic sites, museums, water parks, and state parks.

<http://www.travelwisconsin.com/tour/indexs.html>



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News

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Statistically Speaking. . .

Wisconsin Main Street Reinvestment Statistics 1988-2000

Total Public Improvements	679
Investment in Public Improvements	\$96,128,265
Total Building Rehabilitations	2,297
Investment in Building Rehabilitations	\$111,058,204
Total New Businesses	1,175
Total Business Relocations and Expansions	840
Total New Jobs	9,479
Total New Buildings	109
Private Investment in New Buildings	\$76,889,939
Total Buildings Sold	648
Private Investment in Buildings Sold	\$69,126,558
Total New Downtown Housing Units	329
Total Private Investment	\$257,074,701
Total Public and Private Investment	\$353,202,966

Mark Your Calendar

**October
10-11**

**Governor's
Conference
on Downtown
Revitalization
*La Crosse, WI***



Check out these books!

The Wisconsin Main Street library contains more than 300 books, manuals, workbooks, slide programs, and videos on various downtown topics. Any state resident may check out an item for a three-week period. For more information, call Don Barnum at (608) 266-7531.

[The Creative Communicator—399 Tools to Communicate Commitment Without Boring People to Death!](#) By Barbara Glanz provides models, guidelines, and ideas that offer innovative ways to creatively communicate a company's commitment to service and quality. Barbara Glanz uses real-life examples to give readers an idea-generating resource that helps convey commitment to employees and customers. Successful organizations and individuals offer fresh, inventive, and easy-to-reference ideas for different types of communication. Learn how to:

- Create mission statements and policies and effectively communicate them to create employee commitment.
- Develop marketing materials such as newsletters, service guarantees, and brochures that will be read and saved.
- Demonstrate through personal executive actions a vital and believable commitment.
- Show daily affirmation and appreciation for both employees and customers in memorable and creative ways.
- Utilize video, e-mail, voice mail, and fax machines to send a message of commitment.
- Use creative rewards to gain employee buy-in.

[The Small Town Planning Handbook](#) by Thomas Daniels, John Keller, and Mark Lapping argue that planning in small towns requires sensitivity to both local character

and the reality of limited resources. There are over 13,000 towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants in the United States. Most are located in the Great Plains, Midwest, and Southeast. Small towns share the common trait of being an incorporated political unit with a distinct local government. Yet, small towns are different from one another not only in size and location, but also in economic base and social conditions. These differences make planning in small towns a special challenge. The authors investigate areas such as economic development, small town design, and strategic planning. They show how to develop a comprehensive town plan, draft and apply land-use regulations that put the plan into effect, and create sustainable small towns. Written in clear concise language, this book is a must for planning practitioners, students, public officials, and private citizens.



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